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## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LEADERS JOIN FORCES TO LOBBY CONGRESS FOR KEY TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C** – In a strong show of regional unity, transportation leaders from the six counties that make up the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region met with congressional representatives this week to advocate for its 2005 Consensus Program, a mutually agreed upon package of priority transportation projects. The projects involved improvements to core transportation programs, such as light rail, rapid transit systems and enrichment of the region's goods movement network.

"We are bringing to Congress a powerful message of consensus and unity on a series of mutually agreed upon transportation investments vital to our region and the nation," said Temecula mayor pro tem and SCAG president Ron Roberts. "This unified approach will go a long way in helping us get these vital projects funded, from roads and mass transit service to critical goods movement improvements."

The Southern California delegation met with congressional leaders, to advocate funding of the priority projects contained in SCAG's Consensus Program. Congress is currently in the process of reauthorizing TEA-21, the primary federal transportation legislation that will authorize funding for key transportation projects across the country.

The package of projects in the Consensus Program include funding requests for:

- Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension: Light rail service in the Eastside and Exposition Park areas of Los Angeles County
- Perris Valley Line: 19-mile extension to the Metrolink 91 line connecting Riverside and Los Angeles Counties
- Adding a multi-purpose lane to the 91 Freeway and a truck climbing lane to the 57 Freeway in Orange County
- I-215 widening the Colton Crossing grade separation in San Bernardino County
- Widening of the SR-23 and SR-118 Freeway in Ventura County
- Improvements to SR-78, SR-98 and I-8 in Imperial County

"Southern California's transportation system is the economic engine driving both the state and the national economies. It delivers the largest proportion of goods and services that link the United States with its global markets," said Pam O'Connor, Santa Monica mayor and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board member. "Our package was received positively by our congressional leaders, and we hope that our message will translate into real dollars coming back to Southern California."

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“Our delegation carried a very strong message to Congress, and I was impressed with the way in which we articulated Southern California’s transportation needs,” said Victor Carrillo, Imperial County Supervisor and chair of the Imperial Valley Association of Governments. “It is critical that we deliver and maintain our unified message to ensure that Southern California receives its fair share of federal dollars.”

The Southern California Consensus delegation was represented by:

- Ron Roberts, Temecula mayor pro tem and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) president
- Lee Ann Garcia, Grand Terrace city councilmember and SCAG Transportation and Communications Committee chair
- Pam O’Connor, Santa Monica mayor and Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board member
- Kelly Chastain, Colton city councilmember and San Bernardino Associated Governments vice president
- Art Brown, Buena Park mayor pro tem, Metrolink chair, Orange County Transportation Authority vice chair
- Robin Lowe, Hemet vice mayor and SCAG Riverside County Transportation Commission chair
- John Proctor, Santa Paula city councilmember and Ventura County Transportation Commission chair
- Victor Carrillo, Imperial County supervisor and Imperial Valley Association of Governments chair

The group met with a number of the Southern California congressional delegation and other transportation leaders on Capitol Hill during their trip to Washington this week, including:

- U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer
- Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-Redlands)
- Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-Carson)
- Rep. Joe Baca (D-Ontario)
- Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Riverside)
- Rep. Chris Cox (R-Orange County)
- Rep. Buck McKeon (R-Santa Clarita)
- Rachel Miller (Staff to Senator Dianne Feinstein)

In addition to presenting the Consensus Program to congressional leaders, the regional delegation also presented its priorities to the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Undersecretary for Policy, and the State of California’s transportation counsel.

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**[EDITOR’S NOTE: For more information about the Southern California Consensus Program or to obtain a copy of the Consensus document, please call Jeff Lustgarten of Cerrell Associates at 323/466-3445]**